

# REGION

## Church wavers in wind

Weight of bell  
saves steeple  
from toppling

By Bill Giolopoulos  
MPG Newspapers

**DUXBURY** — Mother Nature took a swipe at the Holy Family Church's steeple Friday and nearly brought the towering structure down.

Rain and gale force winds — gusting between 70 and 80 miles per hour — tore through the South Shore Friday, causing power outages, floods and downed trees. The storm also crippled the eight-year-old church steeple.

"People working in the upper church started hearing noises around 1 p.m.," said Monsignor William Glynn. "We went outside and the steeple was swaying back and forth."

Fire and police units were called to the scene around 3:15 p.m. and immediately evacuated the building, fearing the 62-foot white steeple and its 4,000-pound bell would come crashing to the ground.

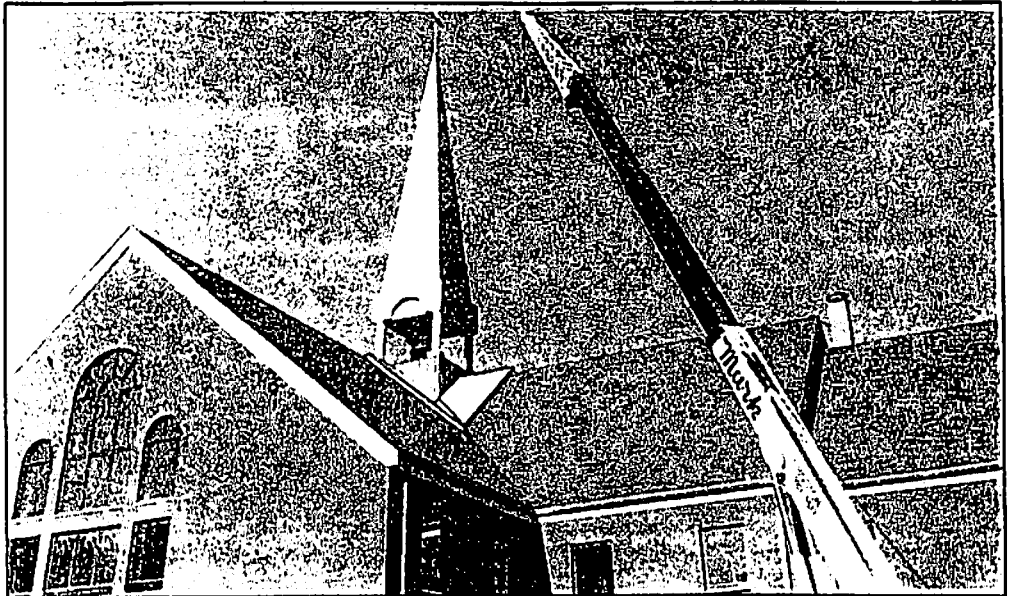
"There was nothing we could do to stop it," said Deputy Fire Chief William Harriman. "We set up fire lines and barricaded the entrances."

Fire crews stayed on the scene until 4:30 p.m., and police cruisers kept a vigil all weekend.

"The town authorities have done a wonderful job," said Glynn Saturday afternoon.

Television crews from the three major Boston stations arrived at the scene Saturday to interview Glynn and check on the damage.

"This is not the way we like to



Staff photo/Bill Giolopoulos

**Steeple chase** — A crane hovers over Holy Family Church in Duxbury Saturday, after high winds damaged its steeple Friday. The steeple was removed Monday.

get publicity for our church," said Glynn, who stayed at the church all night.

Architects and engineers who built the church inspected the damage to the steeple Saturday to see if it could be shored up but said damage was beyond repair.

"The steeple is going to have to be removed," said William Duffy of Campbellsville Industries, the company that built the steeple. "I went up this morning and removed the two bases, but we won't know what failed until it comes down."

Duffy said only the weight of the bell is keeping the steeple from toppling.

Plans were being made to remove the steeple on Tuesday. Dave Smith, chairman of the church finance committee, said the church's insurance company was scheduled to be on the scene Monday to assess the damage.

Phone lines were busy all weekend as some 2,100 families who attend Holy Family called to check on the status of the church and Masses.

Weekend Masses were called off for safety reasons. Glynn, after consulting with diocese authorities, told churchgoers they did not have to attend Mass Sunday, but could go to parishes in other communities if they wanted.

Smith said the steeple will remain down until the cause for the structural failure is determined and the steeple can be safely reinstalled.

"The church will reopen on Wednesday," said Smith.

The Holy Family Church was built in 1988 at an estimated cost of \$3 million.

Harriman said the problem with the steeple was one of 15 emergency calls the fire department responded to Friday.

"It really was a tough day," said Harriman. "The calls were mostly for downed power lines and flooding."